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ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY KICKS OFF SATURDAY WITH IROQUOIS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2017) – The Road to the Kentucky Derby officially begins Saturday at Churchill Downs as 10 promising 2-year-olds, led by Saratoga Special (Grade II) runner-up **Hollywood Star** and Bashford Manor (GIII) winner **Ten City**, were entered in Saturday's 36th running of the \$150,000 Iroquois Stakes (GIII) at 1 1/16 miles.

The Iroquois, one of four stakes events on the first Saturday of the 11-day September Meet at Churchill Downs, is the first scoring race on the 2017-18 "Road to the Kentucky Derby" – the series of 35 races that will ultimately determine the field for the 144th running of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (GI) on Saturday, May 5, 2018. Points awarded to the Top 4 Iroquois finishers will be 10-4-2-1 as part of the 19-race "Prep Season" that showcases foundation-building races in advance of the "Kentucky Derby Championship Series," which begins in late February.

The Iroquois also is part of the Breeders' Cup "Win & You're In Juvenile Division" and its winner will earn an automatic berth into the \$2 million Sentient Jet Breeders' Cup Juvenile (GI). Breeders' Cup will pay \$60,000 in entry fees and provide travel allowances for the connections to compete in the Nov. 4 Juvenile at Del Mar.

Albaugh Family Stable's Hollywood Star (2-1-1-0—\$68,020) is the horse to beat in the Iroquois after finishing second to **Copper Bullet** in the \$200,000 Saratoga Special over 6 1/2 furlongs five weeks ago.

Purchased for \$550,000 as a yearling, Hollywood Star broke his maiden at first-asking at Churchill Downs in June. For his next start in the Saratoga Special, the Malibu Moon colt broke a step slow and chased from near the back of the nine-horse field before he commenced his rally on the final turn. The Kentucky-bred was second best and came up four lengths short of impressive victor Copper Bullet but was two lengths ahead of third-place finisher **Tempestad**.

The Iroquois was to be the next start for Copper Bullet, but he's been sidelined with a minor shin injury, according to his connections.

"I thought Hollywood Star ran a great race against Copper Bullet in the Saratoga Special," said trainer **Dale Romans**, a two-time Iroquois winner with **Cleburne** (2013) and **Not This Time** (2016). "Copper Bullet is a really nice horse for (trainer) **Steve (Asmussen)** and we were just second best. The Iroquois is a great spot for him to try and get started on the Road to the Kentucky Derby. Every horse in our barn is a Derby horse until they prove us otherwise and the Albaugh Family has some very nice 2-year-olds with us right now."

The Albaugh arsenal is headed by their top-three: Ellis Park Juvenile winner **Dak Attack**, Hopeful (GI) runner-up **Free Drop Billy** and **Hollywood Star**. Dak Attack appears headed to the 1 1/16-mile Breeders' Futurity (GI) at Keeneland on Oct. 7, and Free Drop Billy may target the one-mile Champagne (GI) at Belmont Park on the same day.

Two horses that finished behind Hollywood Star in the Saratoga Special – fourth-place finisher **Bal Harbour** and eighth-place finisher **Barry Lee** – returned to win stakes in their next start: the \$82,000 Sapling and \$75,000 Arlington-Washington Futurity, respectively. Also, **Bourbon Resolution**, who finished a half-length behind Hollywood Star in his June 28 debut, broke his maiden at Saratoga against a well-meant cast of juveniles on Sept. 2.

"When we first saw (Hollywood Star) at Keeneland (during the 2016 September Yearling Sale) he stood out to both Dale and me," **Dennis Albaugh** said. "He's a great looking son of Malibu Moon."

"You know, every time I come to Churchill there's always one goal in mind and that's to win the Kentucky Derby. We have three very nice 2-year-olds right now and hopefully we'll give ourselves a good shot to be in the gate. Saturday will be a good test for Hollywood Star in the Iroquois to get him on his way."

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Hollywood Star, who will break from post No. 2 under veteran **Robby Albarado**, is one of nine horses entered by Romans in six races on Saturday as the 50-year-old South Louisville native attempts to become only the second trainer in history to win 700 races at Churchill Downs and surpass Hall of Famer **Bill Mott** as the track's all-time leading trainer in races won. Mott, who has held the record for 31 years, begins the September Meet with a 701-to-699 lead over Romans, who also has three scheduled starters for Friday's opener. Mott has none entered Friday and two on Saturday.

Hollywood Star's chief Iroquois rival could be **Tommie M. Lewis** and **Magdalena Racing's** Ten City (3-2-0-1—\$105,050), who dazzled onlookers in his first two starts, including a 1 ½-length victory over Copper Bullet in the six-furlong Bashford Manor at Churchill Downs on closing night of the Spring Meet. However, the **Kenny McPeck**-trained son of Run Away and Hide faltered as the 3-5 favorite in the \$75,000 Ellis Park Juvenile over seven furlongs while finishing third, 4 ¾ lengths back of Dak Attack.

McPeck won the 2001 Iroquois with eventual \$3.6 million-earner **Harlan's Holiday**.

Also entered is **John C. Oxley's** unbeaten Scat Daddy colt **Flameaway** (2-2-0-0—\$92,574), who won the \$100,000 Skidmore for trainer **Mark Casse** at Saratoga when the race was taken off the turf and run over 5 ½ furlongs in the mud. Casse also entered **Gary Barber** and **Cheyenne Stables LLC's** **Mo Diddley** (2-1-0-0—\$22,960), a son of Uncle Mo who won his May 18 debut at Churchill Downs and returned to finish seventh in the Saratoga Special, 7 ¾ lengths behind Hollywood Star.

Casse had previous success in the Iroquois with **Uncaptured** in 2012, the last year it was staged during the Fall Meet before it was moved to mid-September.

Stakes winner **The Tabulator** (2-2-0-0—\$55,200), owned by **Carolyn Wilson**, invades Kentucky from trainer **Larry Rivelli's** Chicago base after winning the \$65,000 Prairie Gold Juvenile at Iowa's Prairie Meadows on July 28. The Dialed In colt beat **Mr. Jagermeister** that day by 2 ¼ lengths, and the runner-up returned with a vengeance while winning the \$85,000 Northern Lights Futurity at Canterbury Park by 15 ½ lengths.

The complete Iroquois field from the rail out (with jockey and assigned weight): Ten City (Jack Gilligan, 122 pounds); Hollywood Star (Albarado, 118); **Pont Du Gard** (Florent Geroux, 118); **Tres Equis** (Kendrick Carmouche, 118); **Ebben** (James Graham, 118); **Smart Remark** (Manny Cruz, 118); Flameaway (Julien Leparoux, 120); **Big Gemmy** (Brian Hernandez Jr., 118); The Tabulator (Jose Valdivia Jr., 120); and Mo Diddley (Corey Lanerie, 118).

The Iroquois is carded as Race 10 at 5:20 p.m. (all times Eastern) on an 11-race card that begins at 12:45 p.m.

The Iroquois shares Saturday's spotlight with the 49th running of the \$200,000 Pocahontas (GII) for 2-year-old fillies, a 1 1/16 mile event that kicks off the "Road to the Kentucky Oaks" and is part of the Breeders' Cup "Win and You're In Juvenile Fillies Division."

Other stakes races on Saturday's program are the 34th running of the \$100,000 Locust Grove (GIII) for fillies and mares at 1 1/16 miles and the ninth running of the \$100,000 Open Mind (Listed) for fillies and mares at six furlongs.

The four stakes, which are the last four races on the card, comprise an all-stakes late Pick 4 and are part of the late Pick 5 and Single 6 Jackpot sequence.

Central Avenue will be bustling with activity Saturday. In addition to racing at Churchill Downs, **ESPN's College GameDay** will be in town in advance of that night's nationally-televvised **ACC** showdown on **ABC** between the 14th-ranked **University of Louisville** football team and third-ranked **Clemson** at nearby Papa John's Cardinal Stadium. Kickoff is 8 p.m., which means visitors can enjoy the best of both worlds as Churchill Downs' final race is set for 5:50 p.m.

Two years ago, approximately 1,000 Clemson fans pre-gamed at Churchill Downs, and their alumni has booked an event for Saturday. Also, **WCCP 105.5 FM**, the flagship station of Clemson athletics, will broadcast a pre-game show from Churchill Downs' Plaza that day, and are encouraging fans to attend.

Churchill Downs plans to run "hype" videos provided by both UofL and Clemson on its massive outdoor "Big Board" throughout the day, and the track's iconic Twin Spires will be cast in a red glow through Saturday night in support of its neighboring University of Louisville.

The fifth annual September Meet Presented by Commonwealth Technology begins Friday at Churchill Downs with a 10-race program at 12:45 p.m. and continues on a Thursday-Sunday schedule through Oct. 1. This year's three-week, boutique race meeting will feature record purse levels as horsemen compete for \$4.81 million in prize money, which averages to \$437,000 per day.

Admission gates on Friday and Saturday open at 11:30 a.m. with the first race scheduled for 12:45 p.m. Parking gates will open at 10:30 a.m. and parking is free in the Longfield Avenue lot (Gates 10 & 12). Valet parking is \$10. Initial work on a construction project will temporarily alter traffic and parking for a segment of guests who plan to attend. Guests are advised to visit www.ChurchillDowns.com/Parking in advance of attending to view recommended alternative routes and a complete list of guest-appropriate temporary parking lots.

General admission is \$3 (\$1 for seniors age 60 and up) and \$10 for Downs After Dark on Saturday, Sept. 23. Reserved box seats are \$10 (\$25 for Downs After Dark) and indoor dining options are \$38 (\$70 for Downs After Dark). Children 12 and under are admitted free when accompanied by an adult (Downs After Dark policy: no one under the age of 18 will be admitted to the track unless they are accompanied by a parent or responsible adult). Free seating is available over a first-come, first-serve basis in Sections 115-117. Tickets can be purchased online at www.ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets or by calling (502) 636-4400.

Opening weekend weather in Louisville will be ideal, according to the **National Weather Service**, with a forecast of most sunny skies and temperatures in the 80s.

STAKES WINNERS KELLY'S HUMOR, SUNNY SKIES, FIRSTMATE, TAKE CHARGE PAULA TOP TALENTED FIELD FOR SATURDAY'S GRADE II, \$200,000 POCAHONTAS

A quartet of stakes winners heads a talented and promising field of a dozen 2-year-old fillies entered to compete in Saturday's 49th running of the \$200,000 Pocahontas (Grade II) at Churchill Downs, one of four stakes races scheduled at the Louisville track on the first Saturday of its 11-day September Meet and an event with implications for both next spring's 144th running of the Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) and the upcoming \$2 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (GI).

The Pocahontas will be the last of 11 races on the Saturday racing program and has a scheduled post time of 5:50 p.m. (all times Eastern).

Top contenders in the Pocahontas include **Ike and Dawn Thrash's** unbeaten **Kelly's Humor** and **Normandy Farm's Sunny Skies**, the 1-3 finishers in the recent \$75,000 Ellis Park Debutante; **Barry and Joni Butzkow's Firstmate**, a dominant winner in last month's \$85,000 Northern Lights Debutante for Minnesota-bred fillies at Canterbury Park and **Bruce Talisman's** unbeaten **Take Charge Paula**, winner of the \$50,000 White Clay Creek Stakes in her most recent outing at Delaware Park.

The 1 1/16-mile race opens the "Road to the Kentucky Oaks" points system that will determine the eligibility of the fillies that will compete in the maximum field of 14 that will contest the 1 1/8-mile race that is America's top race for 3-year-old fillies. The Pocahontas offers Kentucky Oaks points on a scale of 10-4-2-1 to its top four finishers.

The Pocahontas is also a Breeders' Cup "Win and You're In" Challenge race for Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies, which will be run on Saturday, Nov. 4 at Southern California's Del Mar Thoroughbred Club. The Pocahontas winner will earn an automatic berth in the starting gate for the 1 1/16-mile race for 2-year-old fillies, along with \$60,000 in starting fees and a travel stipend.

Kelly's Humor, a daughter of Midnight Lute trained by **Brad Cox**, is perfect after two races in her young career, both at Kentucky's Ellis Park. She was a front-running winner in her debut in a maiden event at Ellis Park's one-mile distance, but had to rally from ninth in a field of 11 in her victory in the seven-furlong Debutante at odds of 11-1. The Pocahontas will be the first outing for Kelly's Humor in which Cox's filly will be required to navigate two turns.

"With a lot of horses in this field stretching out for the first time, it's really a test to see who can handle the distance," Cox said. "Our filly should really enjoy going two turns. She's been training great and I'm really looking forward to running her 1 1/16 miles."

Kelly's Humor drew the outside post in the field of 12 and will be ridden by **Shaun Bridgmohan**, who was in the saddle for her triumph in the Ellis Park Debutante.

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Sunny Skies, a daughter of 2012 Kentucky Derby (GI) winner **Animal Kingdom**, won the \$100,000 Debutante over a sloppy track at Churchill Downs on June 30 – her second front-running victory in as many races. But the **Kenny McPeck** trainee had to rally from eighth in the Ellis Park Debutante to eventually finish third, 2 ¼ lengths behind Kelly's Humor.

Regular jockey Robby Albarado will ride Sunny Skies, who will start from post eight.

While she faced restricted competition in her racing debut in the Northern Lights Debutante, Firstmate was a dazzling winner for Churchill Downs-based trainer **Joe Sharp** in the six-furlong race. The daughter of Midshipman endured a rough start that left her 20 lengths off the early pace, but she circled the field six-wide to romp by nine lengths. **Kendrick Carmouche** will ride Firstmate, who drew post two.

Trainer **Kelly Breen** has shipped unbeaten **Take Charge Paula** from his base at New Jersey's Monmouth Park to Churchill Downs for the Pocahontas. The daughter of Take Charge Indy won the \$50,000 White Clay Creek Stakes at 5 ½ furlongs in her most recent start at Delaware Park. **James Graham** will ride Take Charge Paula, who will break from post seven in her first attempt at a two-turn distance.

Also among the likely major players in the Pocahontas is **Allied Racing Stable LLC's Upset Brewing**, who has never finished worse than second in four career starts that include a 9 ¾-length maiden triumph at Ellis Park and runner-up finishes in both the Debutante at Churchill Downs and the Ellis Park Debutante. Trained by **William "Buff" Bradley**, the daughter of Justin Philip will be ridden by **Corey Lanerie**, who was in the saddle for her two most recent races.

Another filly to watch is **John C. Oxley's Snowfire**, a gray daughter of Tapit who won her racing debut at Churchill Downs on June 29 before she finished fourth behind the unbeaten **Dream It Is** in the Schuylerville (GII) at Saratoga. The **Mark Casse** trainee drew post 10 and regular rider **Julien Leparoux** is scheduled to be in the irons.

The field for the Pocahontas, in order of post position (with jockey and assigned weight): **Lady Freedom** (Florent Geroux, 118), Firstmate (Carmouche, 120), Snowfire (Leparoux, 118), **Harbor Lights** (Ricardo Santana Jr., 118), **Primo Extremo** (Walter De La Cruz, 118), **Vision of Justice** (Gabriel Saez, 118), Take Charge Paula (Graham, 120), Sunny Skies (Albarado, 120), **Sultry** (Joe Rocco Jr., 118), Upset Brewing (Lanerie, 118), **Patrona Margarita** (Brian Hernandez Jr., 118) and Kelly's Humor (Bridgmohan, 120).

TIGER MOTH TOPS COMPETITIVE FIELD FOR GRADE III, \$100,000 LOCUST GROVE

John Gunther's Tiger Moth looks to pick up her third-consecutive stakes victory in Saturday's 34th running of the \$100,000 Locust Grove (GIII) at Churchill Downs.

The Locust Grove, for fillies and mares 3-years-old and up run at 1 1/16 miles, is carded as Race 8 on the 11-race program with a scheduled post time of 4:18 p.m. (all times Eastern).

Trained by **Brad Cox**, Tiger Moth picked up her first stakes win on July 15 in the Mari Hulman George Memorial at Indiana Grand when she defeated a field of eight rivals by 2 ½ lengths. The 5-year-old mare by Street Sense was victorious nearly a month later in Ellis Park's Groupie Doll (GIII), narrowly defeating the **Ian Wilkes**-trained **Walkabout**.

"She's really been progressing well," Cox said. "I think we've figured things out with her and she should be sitting on another solid effort for Saturday's race. She does her best running from off the pace so hopefully we'll get some help up front."

Tiger Moth has career earnings of \$348,207 with a record of 17-5-4-2 and will be ridden by **Corey Lanerie**.

Six other fillies and mares are set to take on Tiger Moth including **Merriebelle Stable LLC's Blue Prize (Arg)**. Already a Group I winner in Argentina, Blue Prize was the bridesmaid in her first three starts in the U.S. for trainer **Ignacio "Nacho" Correas IV**. Most recently, the 4-year-old daughter of Pure Prize was the runner-up in Saratoga's \$100,000 Summer Colony Stakes. **James Graham** will have the riding assignment.

Wilkes is set for his rematch versus Tiger Moth with two entrants: **Fuhriously Kissed** and **Sweetgrass**. Anita Cauley's Fuhriously Kissed was an impressive four-length winner in an allowance event on July 24 at Saratoga. The 4-year-old daughter of Langfuhr tested her hand in the Summer Colony at Saratoga but finished third, beaten 6 3/4 lengths. Wilkes' other entrant, Sweetgrass, is seeking her first stakes victory as she stretches around two turns for the first time in more than nine months. **Julien Leparoux** has the call on Fuhriously Kissed while Wilkes' son-in-law **Chris Landeros** will get the leg-up on Sweetgrass.

Brooklynsway (22-6-3-3 —\$723,597) will try to round back into form in her fourth start back after a 356-day layoff for trainer **Bernie Flint**.

Mo D'Amour (15-3-1-4 —\$304,460) is no stranger to big races at Churchill Downs, finishing fifth in the 2016 Kentucky Oaks. The 4-year-old filly by Uncle Mo was transferred in July from trainer **Todd Pletcher** to **Rodolphe Brisset**.

Rounding out the field is **G. Watts Humphrey Jr.**'s homebred **Romantic Vision** (17-4-4-2 —\$249,326). Trained by **Rusty Arnold II**, Romantic Vision will be seeking her first stakes victory.

The Locust Grove field from the rail out (with jockeys): Brooklynsway (Robby Albarado); Blue Prize (Arg) (Graham); Mo D'Amour (Florent Geroux); Romantic Vision (Brian Hernandez Jr.); Fuhriously Kissed (Leparoux); Sweetgrass (Landeros); Tiger Moth (Lanerie).

MAYLA, IVY BELL TAKE CENTERSTAGE IN SATURDAY'S \$100,000 OPEN MIND

Carl Moore Management LLC and **Brad Grady's Mayla** and **Brook T. Investment's Ivy Bell** are familiar with seeing the tail-end of multiple graded stakes winner **Finley'sluckycharm** at Churchill Downs but the two sprinters will get the opportunity to shine themselves in Saturday's ninth running of the \$100,000 Open Mind (Listed).

The six-furlong Open Mind for fillies and mares is scheduled as Race 9 with a post time of 4:49 p.m.

Mayla, trained by **Bret Calhoun**, has been facing her stablemate Finley'sluckycharm in three of her last four starts. However, Finley'sluckycharm is targeting the \$250,000 Thoroughbred Club of America (GII) at Keeneland on Oct. 7, according to assistant trainer **Dennis "Peaches" Geier**.

"We breezed her (Finley'sluckycharm) Friday and she's doing well after Saratoga this summer," Geier said. "Mayla is doing very well, too. Hopefully she'll turn the corner and get the job done Saturday."

Mayla (22-5-6-5—\$299,604) was most recently the runner-up in the Aug. 12 \$75,000 Twixt Stakes at Laurel Park but previously finished third behind Finley'sluckycharm in the \$100,000 Chicago Handicap (GIII) on June 24 at Churchill Downs.

Gabriel Saez will have the call to ride Mayla.

Ivy Bell, trained by **William Denzik Jr.**, has been victorious in three out of her last four starts, including a 1 1/2-length score in the Aug. 5 \$75,000 West Virginia Secretary Stakes at Mountaineer. The only blemish of 2017 for the 4-year-old filly by Archarcharch was a runner-up finish behind Finley'sluckycharm in the Chicago Handicap.

The Open Mind field from the rail out (with jockeys): **Grace's Treasure** (Jesus Castanon); Mayla (Saez); **Profound Moment** (C.J. McMahon); Ivy Bell (Brian Hernandez Jr.); **Athena** (Joe Rocco Jr.); and **Tricky Zippy** (Corey Lanerie).

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